

Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Partnership (APNEP)  
February 2022

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# Albemarle - Pamlico

## National Estuary Partnership

# Sound Stories



February 2022



How did you celebrate ["I Heart Estuaries" week](#) this year? If you didn't have the chance to explore one of these unique ecosystems in February, we hope you'll be able to get out in the Albemarle-Pamlico or another of the [National Estuary Program](#) sites sooner rather than later. Here at APNEP we're starting to gear up for another spring and summer of exciting initiatives, including [Shad in the Classroom](#) and [submerged aquatic vegetation \(SAV\) surveys](#). We're also excited to announce that on February 18th, Governor Cooper signed [Executive Order 250](#) to reauthorize the Partnership. Stay tuned for more information about these projects in the coming months!

Sincerely,

Dr. Bill Crowell

APNEP Director

# APNEP News

## State of North Carolina

ROY COOPER  
GOVERNOR

February 18, 2022

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 250

ALBEMARLE-PAMLICO NATIONAL ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP

WHEREAS, the Albemarle-Pamlico Estuary comprises one of the nation's largest estuaries, is distinguished by its remarkable biodiversity, natural resources, and history, and provides extensive benefits to North Carolina's economy; and

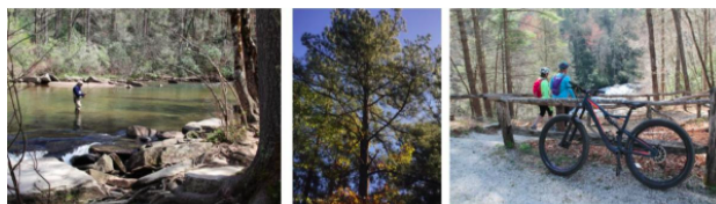
WHEREAS, the United States Congress designated the Albemarle-Pamlico Sounds as an "estuary of national significance" in 1987; and

WHEREAS, the protection and restoration of the Albemarle-Pamlico estuarine system supports its ecological integrity, the regional economy, and local communities, and plays an important role in increasing the resilience of coastal communities to the impacts of climate change; and

## Reauthorizes Partnership

On February 18th, NC Governor Cooper [signed Executive Order 250](#), a document that reauthorizes the Partnership's activities. One forthcoming change to the Partnership as a result of this EO will be the reinstatement of a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to work with the Leadership Council on CCMP implementation and meaningful community engagement activities. APNEP will be working to recruit CAC members; stay tuned for updates!

## Announcing the Updated North Carolina Forest Action Plan

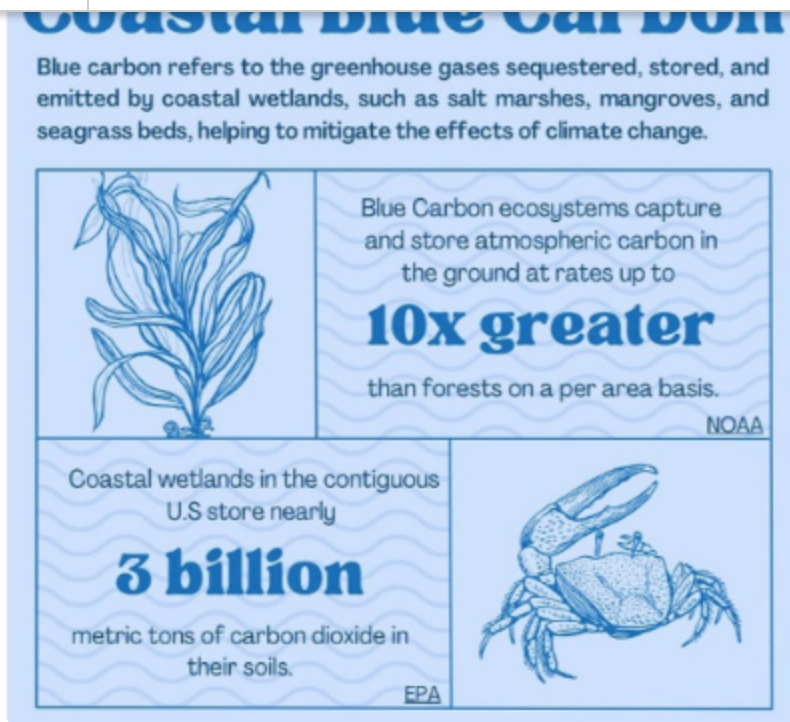


## NC Forest Action Plan is Updated

APNEP participated as a stakeholder in the development of the NC Forest Service's newly published NC Forest Action Plan. The updated Action Plan has been approved by the USDA Forest Service and is now ready for implementation. This Plan is a thorough assessment of North Carolina's forests, with a focus on changes and trends that have occurred since 2010. It not only evaluates past and current forest conditions, but also outlines strategies to keep North Carolina's forests healthy, productive and sustainable.

The APNEP [Science and Technical Advisory Committee](#) (STAC) has identified forestry operations and their impact on water quality as an area of focus and the STAC looks forward to collaborating with the NC Forest Service to accomplish shared goals in the Albemarle-Pamlico watershed.

[Read the NC Forest Action Plan](#)



## North Carolina's Coastal Blue Carbon Efforts

We talk about the multiple ecosystem services that coastal ecosystems provide, including providing habitat for fish and wildlife, erosion control and water quality improvement, and protecting communities from storms and sea level rise. But did you know coastal habitats can also provide a natural way to reduce the impact of greenhouse gases on our atmosphere by sequestering carbon? Our underwater meadows, or submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) and other wetlands play an important role in mitigating climate change.

A workgroup led by [APNEP Leadership Council](#) member Paul Cough (EPA Water, retired), and Chris Baillie, postdoctoral researcher at East Carolina University, are working to quantify this relationship by developing greenhouse gas inventories for SAV and wetlands for inclusion in the NC Greenhouse Gas Inventory. The group is a subcommittee of the [Natural and Working Lands Coastal Habitats Team](#) developed under Executive Order 80. Team members include representatives from the [APNEP Science and Technical Advisory Committee](#) (STAC) who are working to integrate efforts such as the mapping and monitoring work led by the APNEP SAV Team. *Photo credit: Restore America's Estuaries.*

[Learn more about coastal blue carbon efforts in NC](#)

## Celebrate World Wetlands Day Throughout 2022

On World Wetlands Day this February, we highlighted pocosin wetlands - freshwater woody shrub bogs characterized by deep, acidic, sandy



their name from an Algonquian word meaning “swamp on a hill.” This habitat helps to support many species of fish and wildlife, including black bear, red wolves, prothonotary warblers, and wintering waterfowl including tundra swans. The Albemarle-Pamlico Peninsula is the site of the greatest pocosin acreage in the US, but pocosins were historically even more extensive in North Carolina. Pocosins that have been drained and converted to other land uses now emit a significant amount of carbon as CO<sub>2</sub>.

APNEP has long supported identification, protection, and restoration of pocosins to support these wetland ecosystems and improve water quality in the rivers and sounds downstream. More recently, we have been working with partners in the region who are seeking ways to manage this special wetland type while also balancing the interests and needs of stakeholders on adjacent lands. Restoring pocosins to their natural condition has the potential to sequester and store carbon, build community resilience and reduce the risk of coastal flooding, improve water quality, provide habitat for biodiversity, improve ecosystem health, protect against wildfires, and defend against sea level rise. [Learn more about pocosins.](#)

## Past Meeting Summaries

- **APNEP Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Team Meeting, Session 1 & 2 (February 2nd and 9th):** The Team's first meeting focused on research, monitoring, and assessment, while the second focused on policy and management issues. Diverse topics were discussed at February's Team meetings, including recent boat-based and aerial SAV surveys, report compilation, and amendments to the NC Coastal Habitat Protection Plan (CHPP).



Executive Board had selected the Restoration of Diadromous Fishes Within Rivers as one of two priority topics of review. The other priority topic was the impact of forestry practices on water quality as a priority topic for review, which was the theme of the fall meeting. After an overview presentation by STAC Executive Board member Dr. Wilson Laney and APNEP quantitative ecologist Dr. Tim Ellis, winter meeting presentations by representatives of the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries and Wildlife Resources Commission and Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources provided overviews of the role these agencies serve in monitoring practices and research support to facilitate the management of diadromous fishes, with a focus on the Albemarle-Pamlico Estuarine System (APES) waters.



## Upcoming Events & Meetings

All meetings associated with APNEP's committees, Action Teams, and Monitoring & Assessment Teams are free and open to the public. For more information, please contact [apnep@ncdenr.gov](mailto:apnep@ncdenr.gov).

## Current Grant Opportunities



- Ongoing: [NC Community Foundation Disaster Relief Fund](#)
- Ongoing: [NC Sea Grant Minigrants Program](#)

Grant details

# Partner Spotlight



## Celebrate African-American History in Eastern North Carolina

Eastern North Carolina has a wealth of African-American history and culture. A visit to the region isn't complete without experiencing and learning about the region's rich and diverse history. Visit NC has published an article that lists [10 places to explore African-American history in the state](#), including the Harriet Jacobs trail in Edenton and Chicamacomico Life-Saving Station in Rodanthe. The blog NC Tripping [published another article about travel spots celebrating Black culture throughout the state](#), including the African American Heritage Tour in New Bern and African-American Music Trail throughout eastern NC. Lastly, PBS North Carolina has compiled documentaries and specials celebrating Black history, [available on their website](#).

[Learn more](#)

## What We're Reading

- [North Carolina's Coastal Highway is Disappearing - So I Took a Road Trip to Capture It](#) (*Guardian*)
- [5 Lovely Reasons Why We "Heart Estuaries"](#) (*NOAA Fisheries*)
- [Our Coast's People: Last Daughter of Davis Ridge](#) (*Coastal Review Online*)



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